# ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

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# The ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

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### NOTE

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

### Sir Charles Trevelyan

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death on January 24 of Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bt., a friend of this Society from its foundation and its President from 1937 to 1954.

A man of singular integrity, courage and devotion to the enlightenment and peaceful advance of humanity, he never wavered in the cause of friendship and cultural relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union which he first championed as a member of the Union of Democratic Control during the first world war.

In both his terms of office as President of the Board of Education in 1924 and 1929-31 he gave more than one proof of this. His booklet of 1935, "Soviet Russia: A Description for British Workers," was an ardent witness of his faith. During the second world war his house at Wallington radiated energy for every kind of enterprise to bring the two nations closer together. It was indeed only his inability to remain active in this cause, as the years went on, that caused him to give up the Presidency of the SCR.

The unique position and strong roots of the Society owe very much to the abiding work of Charles Trevelyan.

### **Cultural Relations Today**

### H. C. Creighton\*

EW people these days, unless they are purblind with prejudice, take the view that cultural relations with the USSR are undesirable. Public-opinion polls indicate that a majority of the people of our island are in favour of high-level political discussions; it is safe to assume, I think, that an even higher proportion would favour cultural relations.

This has been the position, basically, for some years. It is borne out by the reception given to, and wide interest shown in, Soviet musicians, the Bolshoi Ballet, and the many dance companies that have visited us, not to mention Oleg Popov and the Moscow circus.

It is witnessed too by the incorporation of "sputnik" into our vocabulary rather than the bleepish alternatives used by the newspapers in the excitement of the first days of the conquest of space.

The sputnik has changed the field of cultural relations. From being desirable, they have moved to the plane of necessity. But the sputnik has not only brought about recognition of the need for exchanges; it has underlined their necessity. Here is a story that illustrates the point. When the research chief of the U.S. Air Force, General Donald L. Putt, came back from a visit to the USSR in 1956, he said he was amazed by what he had seen, although he had tried to keep abreast of scientific and technical developments there. He testified to Congress that he "was astounded at the scope of their training programme and at the quantity and quality of their facilities, which are apparently available to all parts of their scientific effort." But what he said did not seem to sink in. A Senator, far from appreciating the words about the quantity and quality of the facilities available, fastened on the General's surprise. "You were astounded?" he asked. "That is correct," the General replied. "I was astounded at the foundation that they are laying in science and technology and the training of people in those fields."

(Violinist Isaac Stern, we might note in passing, was surprised, too, about the same time. "What amazed me", he is reported as saying, "was the number of orchestras everywhere.")

A year later more people were astounded.

Those who, like members of SCR, have been following Soviet cultural developments, and have been advocating the desirability of maximum cultural and scientific exchanges with the USSR these many years, have had no reason to be surprised. They have had good reason rather to be happy that their stand has been vindicated. They can feel proud of the work they have done in good times and hard, paddling with the current and against the stream. "There was a time in the thirties", the *Times Educational Supplement* wrote before Christmas (December 6, 1957), "when all Russian figures were suspect. We must have an uneasy feeling now that they may have been right. Certainly now no one doubts the remarkable rate of producing scientists and engineers at which Russia has arrived." "The need for knowing as much as possible about Russian science is so great", the *New Scientist* wrote on December 19 last (repeating what it had already said on November 21), "that the appointment of a British scientific attaché in Moscow should be made whatever the difficulties, for the advances that have brought Russia to her present position of power are due more to the Academy of Sciences than to the Party Presidium or the armed forces."

<sup>\*</sup> Mr H. Campbell Creighton was appointed Secretary of the SCR by the Executive Committee, vice Mrs Eleanor Fox, who had resigned on taking up another post.

I think all readers of this journal will agree with the desirability of appointing a British cultural attaché in Moscow. The more scientists who can visit the USSR, and the more Soviet scientists who can visit Great Britain and meet and talk with our scientists, the better. As the New Scientist says, the Government "relies for what it knows about Soviet science primarily on hearsay from visiting scientists and translations of Russian periodicals"; but, as the story about General Putt brings out, these are not enough. First-hand experience and personal contact are invaluable for a proper perspective.

The value of cultural relations has perhaps been more deeply appreciated here than in America. Certainly we have been spared the kind of hostility to such activities that was experienced in the United States. The case of Dr Edward Condon, former head of the US Bureau of Standards, is almost tragic in its irony. In a recent report to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he told how in the last decade he had been "badgered . . . for having been interested in the American Soviet Science Society, an organisation which received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation ten years ago to foster translations and wider distribution in this country of the Russian scientific literature. Now, a decade later, we read of crash programmes to translate the Russian scientific literature and spread it around in this country." (New Scientist, December 26, 1957.)

If we are having to pay now in some fields for this kind of neglect of and even discouragement of interest in Soviet science and culture, the converse is also true. Neglect of British, American and other western work in such fields as medicine has hampered progress in the Soviet Union too.

Absence of contact in the arts has had regrettable effects. The lack of acquaintance with each other's work has often made any kind of a dialogue between Soviet and western artists difficult, if not impossible. Writing on the first exhibition of American art to be held in Moscow for many years. Anatoly Chlenkov elaborated this point in a recent number of *New Times*: "Whole schools of art [in the USSR] seem to have escaped the attention of American art critics. In our turn we, who have never before seen American exhibitions, unfortunately know very little of modern American art. This state of affairs can hardly be said to be normal.

"The lack of contact affects not only art criticism. It operates against art itself. . . . How can we discuss and compare, when a good half of [the] names [of Soviet artists] are probably an empty sound to our western colleagues? How different it would be if American artists had the opportunity to make themselves better acquainted with our art, and we with theirs."

That our artists are better acquainted is due in no small measure to the work of SCR.

Happily, it appears that American and Soviet artists will make deeper acquaintance. A very comprehensive agreement on cultural exchanges has been signed by the US and Soviet representatives. A less extensive but comprehensive agreement was signed last September in Paris after negotiations between Mr George Zhukhov, chairman of the Soviet State Committee on Cultural Relations, and the French Government.

But we have no such agreement yet. I think we should consider whether one is not desirable. True, our cultural relations are a good deal further advanced and more developed. And many bodies, official and unofficial, have direct relations with corresponding Soviet bodies. But there are fields where an agreement might help—as for example the exchange of students, not only of Russian or English, but of music and other arts, and of the sciences.

It is heartening to note, from Mr Mayhew's letter in the Manchester Guardian at the beginning of May, that a beginning is being made towards

student exchanges, that there is to be an exchange of art exhibitions, that a British company will possibly go to Moscow in exchange for the forthcoming visit of the Art Theatre and that a British book exhibition is to be held in the Soviet Union in 1959.

But there are gaps in our exchanges. Relations between the British and Soviet film industries are not as good as Franco-Soviet film contacts. The long-drawn-out negotiations for a British film festival in Moscow have not yet borne fruit, have indeed broken down more than once when they seemed on the verge of success. We have no co-productions yet, as French and Indian film men have achieved, though not for lack of film workers who would like to undertake them.

It is still possible, as our Arts Bulletin (Vol. 2, No. 1) has noted, for year-books and annuals produced in Britain to ignore the existence of the thirty-three opera houses of the Soviet Union in listing the opera houses of the world, or to note semi-private productions of new operas in western countries, but ignore public first nights in Moscow and Leningrad. All the details are not as easily available as one might like; but the main facts are there for the editors' asking.

Now that tourist travel is developing in both directions, acquaintance with each other's cultural life is growing. Travelogues, television programmes and travel books are bringing London to the Muscovite and Moscow to the Londoner.

More and more people are realising a truth that Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt expressed on her return last autumn from the USSR, when she said: "We can join in the effort to use all knowledge for the eventual good of all human beings."

This growing mutual knowledge, this joining together in common effort, is just what we want. And the more there is, the more calls we find are made upon SCR. The prospects before the Society are the best they have been in almost the whole of its thirty-four years' work for cultural relations.

### **Cultural Events in 1958**

Sovietskaya Kultura, tri-weekly newspaper of the USSR Ministry of Culture and of the Union of Cultural Workers, publishes the following preliminary programme of cultural events anticipated for the next twelve months.

### At Home

Four ten-day festivals of national art and literature—Georgian, Kazakh, Kirgiz and Uzbek—will be held in Moscow.

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THE International Chaikovsky Contest for Pianists and Violinists will take place in Moscow for the first time. Entries are already coming in from abroad.

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For the first time, too, the Glinka Festival will be held in the birthplace of the great composer—Smolensk.

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ABOUT 250 paintings and nearly 1,000 drawings by Valentin Alexandrovich Serov—the largest collection of this famous artist's work ever assembled—are to be shown at the Tretyakov Gallery in 1958.

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A MUSEUM of the life and work of Pushkin will be opened at 12/2 Kropotkin Street, Moscow. It will occupy eight rooms.

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OVER 60,000 clubs and palaces of culture, nearly 40,000 libraries and another 40,000 cinema theatres, red corners and parks of culture and rest are expected to take part in the all-Russian display of cultural and adult educational institutions which will be completed in May this year. Two hundred and twenty prizes are to be awarded.

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A SYMPOSIUM on the life and work of Leo Tolstoy is to be published on the 130th anniversary of his birth (September 9). Authors will be the research staff of the Tolstoy museums at Yasnaya Poliana (the writer's home) and in Moscow. A new museum, "Tolstoy at Yasnaya Poliana," is to be opened.

Sixty travelling circus groups are planning to give 10,000 performances at clubs and palaces of culture, at red corners, in pits and workers' settlements and at the new industrial building jobs in the Far East and the Arctic in the course of 1958. There are to be 4,500 circus shows at collective farms.

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A SPECIAL "circus collective" is being organised for displays at large stadiums and sports arenas. Five tours are being arranged for the State circuses: Moscow—Kazakhstan—Altai, Moscow—Stalingrad by boat, Ukraine, the Baltic Republics and the Urals.

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THE "Soviet Ballet on Ice" will be one of Moscow's new spectacles.

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New circuses are being organised this year: Georgian, Belorussian and Youth. The Georgians will appear in Moscow for the first time during the festival of Georgian art and literature. A circus building for 2,000 spectators is going up at Minsk (Belorussia).

TEN cities of the Russian Federation held the first round of the All-Union Variety Artists' Contest in January. Professionals, amateurs and students of the colleges of art participated. The second and third rounds were planned for February.

COMPOSERS and soldiers held discussion meetings all over the Soviet Union on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the armed forces (February 23).

"Days of Song" will be organised in all the Republics of the USSR on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Communist League of Youth, October 29. Exhibitions of painting, folk art and applied and decorative arts are to be held. The Republics will hold displays of rural amateur art. Soviet playwrights are taking part in a competition for the best one-act play for amateur performances on this day.

More facilities are being provided in 1958 for exchange concerts between towns and Republics, and for children's and youth concerts of music by Soviet composers.

A CHAIKOVSKY Music Week is being organised at Izhevsk (capital of the Udmurt Autonomous Republic), in which the composer was born, and Klin (Moscow region), where he lived for many years.

"Spring Drama Festivals" will take place in Moscow, Leningrad, the Baltic Republics, Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Ukraine, the Urals and the Volga towns.

POLISH, Czechoslovak and Hungarian films will be shown at film festivals in Kiev, where there will also be a display of children's films from the People's Democracies. Cinema art of the peoples of the East will be on display at Tashkent during the year. An international film festival is being arranged at Leningrad.

THE Ministry of Culture is planning a festival of Soviet ballet at Riga, a festival of dance and song at Kishinev (Moldavia) and a display of songs and dances of the peoples of the USSR in Moscow.

THE plays of Maxim Gorky, I. Franko and M. Kropivnitsky and dramatisations of Leo Tolstoy's novels are to be shown by theatre companies from different parts of the USSR during special seasons at Tula, Gorky, Lvov and Odessa.

DURING the year the following foreign orchestras are expected on tour in the USSR: the Rumanian State Symphonic Orchestra, the symphony orchestra of the German Democratic Republic (conductor F. Konvichny) and the Gewandhaus quartet from the GDR, the Prague Chamber Ensemble and the Smetana Quartet (Czechoslovakia), and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra (USA).

A NUMBER of foreign conductors are coming on individual visits—S. Popov (Bulgaria), A. Korody (Hungary), K. Ančerl (Czechoslovakia), A. Vandernoot (Belgium). Visiting singers will be M. Bohachek and T. Kostov (Bulgaria), B. Friedland (German Democratic Republic) and N. Gazukhova (Czechoslovakia). Violoncellists from France and Czechoslovakia and singers from Argentina, Great Britain and Sweden are expected.

THE Caragiale National Theatre from Bucharest will tour the Ukraine and Moldavia. Arrangements have been made for visits of the Budapest Opera

and the Paris "Grand Opéra" ballet. Czechoslovakia is sending her Central Puppet Theatre, and the Vienna "Ice-Revue" ballet will return with a new programme. Circuses from France and some of the People's Democracies are coming during the year.

### Abroad

THE Bolshoi Theatre Ballet is to visit Paris and Brussels.

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THE Moscow Art Theatre is coming to London and the Maly Theatre is visiting Bulgaria.

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OBRAZTSOV is going to Poland with the Central Puppet Theatre.

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THE Kirov Theatre Ballet (Leningrad) is making a tour of Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

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THE USSR State Folk Dance Ensemble is to visit the USA and Belgium and the State "Beryozka" Ensemble will be seen in Hungary and Albania. The State Academic Russian Choir will visit Belgium, the USSR State Symphony Orchestra and the Azerbaidjan Song and Dance Ensemble will tour China, and the Osipov State Russian Folk Orchestra will be in the German Democratic Republic.

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Soviet vocalists and instrumentalists will also be performing in a number of countries. Emil Gilels is going to the USA, Belgium and Czechoslovakia; David Oistrakh to Great Britain, Belgium and Australia. L. Kogan will tour Japan, Canada and the USA. S. Rikhter is going to Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria. G. Rojdestvensky will visit Great Britain, where the public have now been able to welcome back Zara Dolukhanova. N. Anosov will give a number of concerts in Poland, and G. Oleinichenko will take part in the traditional Prague spring festival.

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A LARGE group of Soviet circus artists is performing in Cairo and Alexandria, headed by Kio; another, led by Filatov, is going to Sweden; a third (director M. Nazarova) is visiting France; and Brussels is to see a number of Soviet circus "aces" including V. Durov and Oleg Popov.

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THE world-famous lion-tamer Irina Bugrimova is to visit Japan, with several other artists, in the summer. Soviet circus artists will also be appearing individually in the European People's Democracies and several other countries.

# The End of "The Provinces" in the Theatre G. Georgievsky

Honoured Worker in the Arts of the RSFSR; Chief Producer, Stavropol Territory Drama Theatre

A anthology-style view of the old provincial theatre has been fixed for all time by Ostrovsky's brilliant portrayal. The provincial theatre means the habitat of the Korinkins and the Milovzorovs, the Arkashkas and the Shmagas, the Velikatovs and the Dudukins. It means a pitiful standard of life, a horrifying void in place of cultural values, an absence of all rights in social and public life, a feeling that oneself and one's profession are barely respectable, and a certain attitude to actresses, not always unfounded, alas. It means art crushed by the grinding ice of "tricks of the trade", art vulgarised by the patronage of the rich, art insulted and injured in a hundred ways, but still genuine and at times inspired. It means the living talents of a Negina and a Kruchinina, the noble spirits of a Narokov and a Neschastlivtsev.

The first ten years of my life were passed in just such a theatrical family, one that had experienced all the troubles and pains of the old provinces, and that had many a sad but true tale to tell of the theatre of the Migayevs and the Pustoslavtsevs. I myself have seen theatres "with buffet", where the intervals were so arranged that the ladies and gentlemen in the audience should have time for a good tuck in; theatres with backstage scandals, where the tragedian was always drunk, where the boss was an illiterate nouveau-riche kulak, who "kept" a theatre as he kept a public-house or a shop. But I have seen other things, too: lives spent in selfless and touching service to art; great artists; sensible customs; original productions. My view of the Russian theatre of those years is richer and broader than the anthology-style view.

What was it that engraved itself most deeply on my heart, that determined my childish impressions of the pre-revolutionary theatre? The fantastic contrasts, utterly without rhyme or reason. The calm, workaday "co-existence" of the most deplorable hackwork and the most indisputable creative achievement. Grains of beauty drowning in the dregs of the theatre in Russia. Seeds of great art struggling up through flourishing thickets of thorns.

A repertoire consisting of melodrama and farce of pretty low quality. Ideological rubbish continually cluttering up the mind. A flat text, stock figures, a depressing monotony of scenic forms. But every season without fail (and in almost every theatre) Wit Works Woe would be played, and The Government Inspector, Hamlet and Othello, Without Dowry, and Chekhov's plays. Every season provincial actors sowed the seeds of reason, of good, of eternal values, through the masterpieces of world theatre.

Production was a more than relative concept, often amounting to no more than the arbitrary decisions of a stage manager who "dressed" the play according to his own tastes and ideas. But the pre-revolutionary provinces also had Sinelnikov and Solovtsov, Nezlobin and Sobolshchikov-Samarin, who were not behind their colleagues in the capital in their searchings and in their creative approach to art. Actors would come to them specially to play certain parts, agreeing to do so on half pay, or even, sometimes, on no pay at all. The establishments where these great artists worked were the provincial actor's university.

What was an actor? A beast of burden. From fifty to seventy new productions a season, two or three first nights a week, constant rush, unlearnt parts, a prompter who became in practice the most important person in the

theatre. But there was another side, which it does no harm to recall today: talented artists who took their business seriously, building up their repertoire year by year, coming back again and again to their favourite parts and improving on their performance in them with each new season, and so perfecting their personal skill in their craft. In pre-revolutionary years I. Slonov played hundreds of parts, and was famous for perhaps six or seven. But the whole of provincial Russia knew his Karandyshev. He played this part in many towns, from the largest and most "theatrically minded" down to the smallest and most insignificant. There is no need for me to mention the high calling of such theatrical wanderers as Vagram Papazyan, Rossov, and, in particular, the brothers Adelheim. With all the obvious disadvantages of touring companies, they still brought Shakespeare to the provincial audience, which in the conditions of those days was a truly heroic feat.

There was a perceptible connection between an actor's success and the remuneration he received. The bit-player of yesterday, if he could succeed in getting himself noticed, would next season be getting the benefit nights, and the parts, and the large salary, while the leading lady of today might tomorrow be pasting up bills for her bread. Every day one had to reaffirm one's rights to do creative work, otherwise those rights were not accorded. And this kept actors in trim, made them have a responsible attitude to each day of their lives in the theatre. There was another "direct connection" though, a sad and cruel one. My father was an actor well known in the provinces when the impresario Duvan-Tortsov absconded, abandoning his affairs and taking what cash there was in the box-office with him; somehow or other those left carried on as a limited company, but my father was reduced to copying out parts in order to earn money to feed his family. Among our family papers are notes of hand issued to "A. Georgievsky, actor" by the impresario Bauer, still unhonoured. The unassailability of the "bosses" was complete. The most respected actors trembled to think where the morrow might find them.

Companies were made up for the season concerned. Those not needed were promptly dismissed. This preserved the theatre from carrying "ballast", and enlarged an actor's "radius of action", permitting him to try out his powers in front of other audiences and with other partners. But this small amount of advantage which the fluidity of companies brought with it was as nothing compared to its grim negative results in condemning the actor to the life of a tramp, with no normal settled home of his own. For there were two seasons per year, a summer and a winter one, and short tours were also arranged in the intervening period. So people lived in hired lodgings with their belongings half packed, unable to start a library of their own, unable to have their children educated, sometimes unable to permit themselves the luxury of having children at all.

And the costumes! What a scourge they were to the acting fraternity! Even third-rank actors had to have a dark and a light suit, evening dress, morning dress and frock-coat. I say nothing of the women. A constant vision of my childhood was this: it is night, the paraffin lamp is smoking, my father is asleep, and so am I, but every time I happen to wake up I see my mother's back bent over a new dress, which must be anished by the morning, in time to be at the theatre for rehearsal. She played "grand coquette" parts, which meant at least ten or twelve outfits a week. Actors and actresses of the same height would get together at the start of a season and swap clothes, footwear and headgear. Not every theatre had anyone in charge of the wardrobe, and there were simply no designers, the result being an unimaginable mixture of styles and tastes in every production.

All these facts, a matter of common enough knowledge, were my mother's and my father's life, and that of many theatre people still alive today, when

the cleansing storm of the October Revolution broke out and swept away all that was old, including the old provincial theatre.

The revolution made a drastic change in the social position of the actor, turning him from a pariah into a respected member of society, one of those who are elected deputies and put on the platform at meetings. It confirmed the theatre in its calling as a tribune and a mentor. It brought about the nationalisation of the theatres, gave theatre to communities which before the revolution had had no written language of their own. It cleansed the repertoire of vulgarity, hackwork and pornography. Actors ceased to be wanderers in their own land; families appeared, children went to school, and their elders, too, began to learn, both professionally and politically. The artists of the theatre had the chance to devote themselves properly to their art.

To accept or not to accept the revolution? I say that no such problem existed, or scarcely any, for provincial theatre people. They had always been democratic. The provincial theatre had accumulated a vast number of reasons for railing against its fate. Soviet power had brought it real liberation: this was understood at once. That is why cases of sabotage or emigration were a rarity in the provinces; that is why there have been and are so many members of the Party among the old provincial actors who had begun their careers before the revolution.

During the very first years of Soviet rule, productions were created in the provinces which shook the hearts of men with their revolutionary passion and the force of their pathos. It will suffice if I name only one of these, Mardzhanov's Fuente Ovejuna, which became a milestone in the history of the Soviet theatre. I am much indebted, for my own formation as artist and as man, to Storm and Lyubov Yarovaya, to Armoured Train and The Breakup, and it was not in the capital that I first saw them. New items from the revolutionary repertoire used even then to migrate very rapidly from the Moscow stage to the provincial.

I cannot say that all the evils of the provincial theatre were cured during the early years of the revolution. The legacy of the past still made itself felt for a long time. I still remember private enterprises started up at the time of the NEP\*, which later burst like soap bubbles. I myself, during my first season in Nizhny Novgorod, acted in plays of little artistic merit and dubious ideology, put on to serve the tastes of the NEP men and the petty bourgeoisie. The Robinsons and the Shmagas did not disappear from the Soviet stage so quickly, either. In short, there was plenty that was hard, plenty that was bad. The important thing was something else. Side by side with the elimination of the old there was proceeding an ardent, hectic building-up of a new theatre, and the new was victorious in all the battles.

The road travelled by the country's theatres during these forty years has been that of abolishing the old contrasts between the capital and the provinces, of levelling up the standards of the theatres working in even the smallest towns, or erasing the demarcation line between the provincial theatre and the theatre in Moscow and Leningrad.

Today the theatre outside these cities is living through a time of spiritual maturity. Today it can stand up to competition with the best theatres in Moscow and Leningrad. People, the audiences and the critics, discuss it with the most exacting standards, making no allowances for "provincialism". Visits by the theatre companies of the capitals to other towns, and by companies from the provinces to the capitals, are part of a process of exchanging experience, and prove useful to both sides. It even happens that a theatre

<sup>\*</sup> The New Economic Policy begun in 1921, after the end of foreign invasion and civil war.

from, say, Dzerzhinsk (and Dzerzhinsk is only a small town in the Gorky Region) comes to Moscow, and the result is quite instructive.

In many aspects of the theatre's creative life workers in the provinces are displaying inventiveness, initiative and resource; we do not learn from the Muscovites any more: in some things we are ahead of them. After all, it is no secret that Mayakovsky's The Bathhouse (Banya) was first revived in the Pskov theatre, and only afterwards in the Moscow Theatre of Satire; that Muscovites were introduced to the plays of de Filippo by the Lesya Ukrainka Theatre of Kiev and by the Sverdlovsk theatre; that Karel Capek's Mother was played in Sverdlovsk before the war and never put on in the capital; that it was the initiative of the Volkov Theatre of Yaroslav that made Gorky's Somov and Others a regular part of the repertoire of our theatres; that in Tambov they put on Ostrovsky's The Deep (Puchina) a year earlier than the Leningrad Pushkin Theatre did so; that Ibsen's Ghosts has been running for ages in Voronezh and Khabarovsk, while in Moscow it is just being announced as a forthcoming production; that the Tbilisi Rustaveli Theatre "risked" putting on Oedipus Rex and the Sverdlovsk and Tallin theatres Antony and Cleopatra; that Story of a Real Man and Virgin Soil Upturned moved into Moscow from little Dzerzhinsk.

A season by a visiting company from Irkutsk has just come to an end in Moscow. The company brought with it a repertoire that any Moscow theatre might be proud of. Out of the eight plays presented, four were new to Muscovites: Levantovskaya's *Dmitri Stoyanov*; Malyarevsky's *Poem of Bread* (Poema o Khlebe); Remarque's *Last Stop* (Poslednyaya Ostanovka), now running at the Central Theatre of the Soviet Army; and Dmitri Kedrin's *Rembrandt*. It is hardly surprising that they played to packed houses.

And the playwrights? Salynsky, from the Urals, has gone to the Moscow Arts Theatre and the Maly, Vinnikov of Krasnodar has been staged at the Central Theatre of the Soviet Army, in the Moscow Soviet Theatre, and in the Komsomol Theatre. The Vakhtangov Theatre (Moscow) has put on the Novosibirsk playwright Lavrentyev's *The Bright One* (Svetlaya), Chepurin of Stalingrad has been one of the leading authors associated with the Central Theatre of the Soviet Army, and a playwright from the Komi Autonomous Republic, Dyakonov, gave the Moscow Theatre of Satire one of its most popular plays, *Wedding with Dowry* (Svadba s Pridanym).

The provincial theatre has long been a forcing-house for new workers for the theatres of the capital. When you have not been in Moscow for a long time, and then arrive and go to see a play, you invariably see someone you know on the stage. There is not a single company without ex-provincial actors in it. Even the Moscow Arts Theatre has taken Andreyeva and Koltsov from the provinces. Ex-provincial producers are continually appearing in the capital, too, from the late Zubov to Varpakhovsky from Kiev, who has just taken over the Yermolova Theatre in Moscow. They appear and they work, not asking for condescension, and sometimes achieving results quite up to "Moscow level".

The provinces today are learning eagerly and reading eagerly. I remember how in 1914 my father was presented with a set of volumes of Shakespeare, and how upset he was, not knowing where he was going to put all those fat volumes. Immediately after the revolution he got together a model library. In our theatre in Stavropol there are two rooms filled with books; during performances they are always very busy. The provinces read books on art quickly, and argue about them. Any lecture on aesthetics, on matters of theory, evokes lively interest. Discussions on the practice of our art are a normal thing. Many people devote much thought and meditation to the secrets of their craft.

The provincial theatre is firmly realistic. This is not to say that in their time people in the provinces have not been carried away by experiments in various "isms"; quite recently there were the fanatics of the Stanislavsky system. But these infatuations soon pass. The provincial theatre is very close to its audience, and knows its wants; it quickly tests and casts aside as unnecessary any deviations from realist standards. Far be it from me to pretend, however, that the provinces have not accumulated quite enough in the way of hackneyed routines, "professional" tricks and outworn acting methods.

Lastly, in the provinces you hardly ever hear complaints about actors not having enough to do or having to sit about waiting for parts, an occupation which has a deadly effect upon an artist. In the best provincial theatres there is plenty of work for all, and for this reason provincial actors are as a rule capable of growing in stature, are constantly "giving themselves the trouble" of extending the range of their abilities. People who work hard and with interest are morally healthy people. The atmosphere in such companies is stable and clean.

Does this mean that provincial theatres today suffer from no ills, that they have already found the answer to all the complex problems of art and life? Of course not.

In this fortieth year of the revolution, on the eve of a great anniversary and festival for the whole people, not only are we entitled to report on what is good, it is our duty to make ourselves aware of our weaknesses and failings. Our workaday life is bright, but not strewn with roses. We meet with difficulties at every step.

The consequences of going over to the "every theatre a self-supporting concern" principle are still making themselves felt; the transition was not everywhere organised in a rational and constructive manner. That period has bequeathed us savagely slashed staffs (I know theatres where even the charwoman was declared redundant), fear of "bad box-office", and a tendency towards "economies" of the sort which, as Bezymensky remarked in The Shot (Vystrel), sometimes turn out to be a worse extravagance. The debit side of making theatre companies permanent bodies has made itself very obvious: a very perceptible amount of ballast has accumulated in the theatres, which slows down their artistic development, and it is no longer possible to dismiss an actor in the old way. We are badly off as regards knowing who is available; there is nowhere for one to have a look at an actor, no one deals centrally with suiting actors to jobs; one takes on an actor on the evidence of an application form, on the list of parts he has played, and as to how he plays them one simply does not know. Unjustified appointments are not uncommon, which is why so many of those appointed to senior posts do not "settle" in the groups entrusted to their leadership. We have not yet got away from "provincial" self-satisfaction, and the tendency to put up with bad taste in choice of repertoire and in style of acting.

Yes, there are plenty of failings, and we know them, but not even these can change the general picture of the life of theatres in the provinces. From the old half-starving, beggarly and illiterate "provincial actor" to the civilised, politically mature "theatre worker outside Moscow" of today, who takes his business seriously and sets himself high standards, the distance is enormous. We feel what we have gained by the revolution, and feel it directly and every day. When for a moment one looks back and stops to think of the way that has been travelled, one turns back to work more eagerly, one wants to achieve still more.

But I am far from wanting to appear addicted to a snobbery of the provinces. However successfully we may work in our various places, all our eyes are

turned towards Moscow. Listen to what producers and actors in the provinces talk about when they gather together. About *The Power of Darkness, Sonnet by Petrarch, Philumena* at the Vakhtangov, the theatres of Jean Vilar and Brecht, the plays performed at the festival. We have seen all these; we have our own opinion about everything. The echoes of each Moscow first night roll quickly round the theatres of the whole country. Even without coming to Moscow we know what "went" and what "flopped", what the audiences are going to see and what they are not keen on, we rejoice in comrades' successes and grieve for their failures. We all hope to get something out of a trip to Moscow, to be the richer for it, to learn something. And how happy we are when our hopes are justified, and how bitter it is, sometimes, to have to admit that they were vain.

I would say that the Moscow theatres should become a gigantic artistic laboratory where new art forms are cultivated, and where only the most worthy have the right to work, not anyone who happens to have found his way there. That will give a perceptible impetus to the theatre, will help it always to remain on the high level which the great October Revolution made accessible to the arts.

From Literaturnaya Gazeta, 19.9.57)



Back from the Bazaar. V. Favorsky. Linocut.

### Soviet Graphic Art Exhibition

¬ HE work of fourteen Soviet graphic artists — in aquatint, charcoal, drypoint, etching, gouache, linocut, mezzotint, pencil, sepia, lithograph, watercolour and woodcut — was exhibited by the SCR at the Suffolk Galleries, London, in October 1957, and at the Beecroft Galleries, Westcliffon-Sea, in January 1958. The exhibition, which aroused considerable interest and was widely reported all over Britain, is to be shown in Liverpool, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Nottingham, Bedford, Bath, Portsmouth and Luton in the course of 1958. The exhibition is being circulated by the Art Exhibitions Bureau.

The artists exhibited, using diverse creative methods within a broadly realistic framework, well conveyed the variety in theme, subject, artistic purpose and workmanship that has developed in the Soviet graphic arts in the course of the last forty years.

Whatever their individual tastes and interests or artistic approach, all these artists are interested, observant and kindly as regards human thoughts, dreams and feelings. Their realism is sometimes traditional, deriving from principles and methods formulated in the nineteenth century, and sometimes is obviously imbued with twentieth-century tastes and aspirations, but the general realist tendency invariably leads to respect for life and its humanist values. Soviet graphic art attempts to make a social and ethical evaluation of the phenomena of life, through the individual temperament of the artist.

It is the hope of the SCR, as of the Union of Soviet Artists, that this exhibition will prove to have been for the British public the beginning of a better acquaintance with Soviet graphic artists, and will help to enhance mutual understanding.

A number of critics regretted the relatively small size and restricted scope of the exhibition (made inevitable by the fact that it was due in London at the same time as the showing of a very large exhibition of similar works in Moscow). Although some considered the general tone and style to be conservative or old-fashioned, others took a different view, and certain artists and works received general warm praise.

The Illustrated London News and The Studio devoted a full page each to reproducing half a dozen or more of the works. We append a representative selection of comments.

- Art News and Review. Various forms of graphic media . . . diversity of subject-matter . . . it is in intimate portraiture and fable illustrations that these Soviet artists are at their best.
- Art Quarterly. . . . The draughtsmanship and craft is, in some cases, exceptional. . . . Some of the smaller works are beautiful in their painstaking execution, but altogether this show undoubtedly carries the flavour of an earlier period.
- Daily Worker. . . Easily the star of the show is 71-year-old Favorsky . . superb wood-engravings . . . Soifertis, whose line-and-wash drawings are brilliantly witty; Litvinenko, whose woodcut illustrations . . are first-rate; and Mironenko, whose larger colour aquatints and etchings . . may look old-fashioned . . . but are fine works of their kind.

- works of their kind.

  East Anglican Times. An outstanding portrait artist is Einmann . . .

  Illustrated London News. . . . strictly conservative, though achieving a pleasing standard of competence. The work of a considerable period is shown . . .

  Jewish Chronicle. . . . scarcely on a satellite-launching level. Indeed, it could all have been done fifty years ago. But it is well done. . . Of their kind, no one could better the illustrations to heroic verse by Kobuladze. And the straightforward portraits by Bakh and Einmann are fine examples of their tradition.

  Manchester Guardian. . . old-fashioned . . conventional . . . the best exhibits are minuscule—the simple little gouache paintings by Nissky, which are sensitive and intelligent.
- and intelligent.

Northern Daily Echo. A faintly Victorian flavour hangs over the conscientious and realistic pictures of most of the artists, but many are skilled technicians and several are really distinguished. The finest is Favorsky, with his exquisite woodcuts and linocuts . . . Nissky does neat, fastidious gouache studies . . . in Soifertis the Russians have a humorist of witty draughtsmanship.

Southend Times. thend Times. . . . a steady stream of visitors . . . One mother, looking at a child drawing, remarked: "Just like a baby!" . . . Animal illustrations of Russian fables appealed to many of the visitors, and they admired their humour and childlike simplicity.

handling. Soifertis . . . sophisticated milieu of humour. Keen observation of attitudes, with a twist of sardonic humour. Kobuladze . . . compositions of Studio. complete and intricate movement . . . crowded tour de force. Nissky . . . typical simplicity and spare but effective means.

. . . Edwardian . . . considerable competence, little fire . . . story-book

quality . .

. . . Some splendid charcoal drawings, some striking gouache West London Press. work by Kobuladze, some delightful lithographs by Pakhomov, and some good portraits. Einmann has two fine portraits in charcoal. . . Outstanding among the work by Kobuladze is his *Battle with the Polovtsians*. . . The only fault to find with this exhibition is its size. A little more space for more work next time, please!

What's On In London? . . . An exhibition . . . representing quite a triumph for

its organisers . .

World News. The subjects are very varied indeed, and there is certainly no impression of artists being "regimented"... Pakhomov's lithographs are homely and have a realism which is more than naturalistic; Favorsky's linecuts and woodcuts are enchanting; and I have never seen such pencil work as that of Reindorf.

Aino BAKH. 56. Estonian. Six works: drypoint, aquatint, mezzotint, monotype. Edward EINMANN. 44. Estonian. Five works: charcoal, pencil, sepia. Vladimir FAVORSKY. 71. Russian. Twenty-five works: linocut, woodcut. Sergei KOBULADZE. 48. Georgian. Eight works: charcoal, gouache. Valentin LITVINENKO. 49. Ukrainian. Eleven works: charcoat, gouache. Vasili MIRONENKO. 47. Ukrainian. Six works: aquatint, colour etching. Georgi NISSKY. 54. Belorussian. Thirteen works: gouache. Alexei PAKHOMOV. 57. Russian. Nine works: lithograph. Maral RAKHMAN-ZADE. 41. Azerbaijanian. Nine works: colour lithograph. Gunter REINDORF. Seven works: pencil, linocut.
Martiros SARYAN. 77. Armenian. Six works: water-colour.
Leonid SOIFERTIS. 46. Ukrainian. Ten works: etching, wash.
Georgi VERENSKY. 71. Ukrainian. Eleven works: etching, lithograph.
Victor VETROGONSKY. 34. Russian. Five works: linocut.

# The World of Ballet

### Paul Czinner's film The Bolshoi Ballet

P AUL CZINNER rendered a great service to the masses and to posterity when he filmed the Bolshoi Ballet. In comparison with the actual performance of this great company at Covent Garden and the Davis Theatre the film has certain drawbacks, however, as well as advantages.

The dance of the Tatars from *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, with which the film begins, loses immensely on the screen. The masterly progression of its choreographic composition is broken up into fragments of close-ups. The passionate swing and barbaric frenzy of the ensemble are completely lost, and individual movements are torn out of their context, whereas at Covent Garden Lakhorov's choreography compared very favourably with Fokine's Polovtsian dances in spite of the inferior music, markedly weak in the film recording and underlining the great superiority of Borodin's musical masterpiece. The film, however, has caught the beauty of many costumes very well.

The superb Spanish dance from Swan Lake, in exquisite costumes, does not lose much in translation to the screen, but rather gains because of the clear facial expression, particularly the play of the women's eyes. The same applies to Glinka's majestic Polonaise and sparkling Cracovienne. The noble bearing of the dancers, their eloquent gestures and magnificent Polish costumes — everything has been precisely recorded.

Rakhmaninov's Spring Water, danced by Bogomolova and Vlassov, also comes out well on the screen, although it does not look quite as ethereal as at the Davis Theatre. The film reveals its ineffable lyrical beauty and shows the importance of elevating an acrobatic element to the level of fine art. The classical school never neglected this element, and the Russians have greatly perfected it. Since the medium of choreographic expression is the human body the choreographer is entitled to use its acrobatic ability as a means to create artistic images.

In Walpurgisnacht a learned integration of an acrobatic element with classical technique produces a breathtaking effect of ethereal beauty and confirms the truth of this contention. This ballet, as we saw it, has gained very much in the film. When it was presented in Croydon most people were not fortunate enough to have seats near the stage, and they could not appreciate the beauty of Walpurgisnacht from the back stalls of the enormous Davis Theatre. It looked cramped on the small stage, and the details of its choreographic pattern were not truly perceptible, whereas on the screen Professor Lavrovsky's masterpiece is revealed in all its splendour. The groupings and their movements surpass all analogous mass compositions by other choreographers.

The cine-camera is pitiless in showing dancers' imperfections. That is why some of them are shy of it. It spares only those who belong to a great school. It serves great dancers well by focusing on qualities which may not be so well seen from a distant seat in a theatre.

Thus Struchkova's technique is shown in all its prodigious virtuosity—the steel pointes, the vertiginous tours, the ethereal leaps, the astounding balance, the fantastic kneeling down from a position on pointes in the finale of one of her variations—all these almost incredible perfections have been perpetuated by the camera, which also does justice to her superb partner Lapauri in showing the virile strength and beauty of his aerial support. But these stupendous technical achievements, though beautiful in themselves, are

only a means to the end, the portrayal of a bacchanale. The film has brought into view the details and style of the picture, which it was difficult to see in the theatre. Certain aspects of the production must, however, be criticised. The costumes of the fauns, with lion skins and bits of fur on their legs, are far from artistic. How different was the costume of this mythological creature in L'Après-Midi d'un Faune! The wine-red colour of Struchkova's dress is very appropriate to a bacchante, and the blue flowers, if they had been beautifully made, would have supplied a good contrast; but, as it is, they, and the bad cut of the dress, mar the idea. It is not the fault of the designer but of the dressmaker. The design of the dresses for nymphs and bacchantes in Walpurgisnacht is excellent, but their cut and ornamentation are not always successful. Some costumes, however, are impeccable, for example that of a man with the magnificent physique of a Greek god, who dances with a cup of wine. If all the costumes had been in perfect taste they would have enhanced the beauty of Professor Lavrovsky's masterly choreography, compared with which Nizhinsky's L'Après-Midi d'un Faune was almost static, like a tedious copy of an archaic Greek frieze, devoid of any dancing. Yet the décor and costumes by Bakst redeemed that ballet and made it æsthetically acceptable even to Rodin. This statement does not imply that the style of the tunics worn by the nymphs in L'Après-Midi d'un Faune would be suitable for the dances in Walpurgisnacht, but it explains how Diaghilev, in sacrificing dance to décor and music, won his ballet such an inflated reputation that æsthetes and cognoscenti who understand little about dancing still speak of its superiority. Gounod's Faust music, with the sweet melodies and "terrifying" fireworks, does not convey the impression of a bacchanale or a witches' sabbath as does, for example, Glazounov's Autumn from The Four Seasons, or, to take another example, Moussorgsky's Night on the Bare Mountain. In spite of this, Lavrovsky's choreography is a consummate masterpiece, which gives great æsthetic pleasure to all who wish above all to see in ballet the apotheosis of the dance.

Ulanova's *Dying Swan*, though marvellous on the screen, was even better in the theatre, where lighting and atmosphere were more appropriate. Even so, the cine-camera has made an invaluable record of this image.

We now come to the second half of the film, Ulanova's peerless Giselle, the superb dramatic acting of the Bolshoi Theatre artists and the incomparable corps de ballet of accomplished ballerinas. This well-known ballet loses much on the screen. At Covent Garden the décor had depth and softer colours, and the entire stage was in the field of vision throughout the action. The outlines on the screen are sometimes blurred when the camera tries to focus on the dancers. The cinema version is drastically cut. The beautiful pas de deux by Bogomolova and Yevdokimov in the first act is omitted. In the second act there are no elusive apparitions of Giselle in the foliage: she appears straight from the wings along the diagonal chains of wilis. The wonderful movement of the two groups of the corps de ballet en arabesque in opposite directions loses enormously in panoramic scale and stereoscopic effect.

Nevertheless, to have filmed even this abbreviated version throughout the night immediately after an evening performance was a heroic deed. In spite of some inevitable weaknesses, it was also a great achievement on the part of Paul Czinner to give ballet lovers of this and future generations an opportunity to see a most perfect performance of one of the three loveliest classical ballets as often as they like for the price of a few shillings, and to enable ballet pupils and dancers to watch and study dancing and acting at their finest.

Ulanova's Giselle is undoubtedly the greatest in this century, and probably in the history of ballet, for it is impossible to imagine any better interpretation of this rôle by the great ballerinas of the last century.

Although I preferred the presentation of this ballet by the same company at Covent Garden, the film has an advantage in that it caught the fine subtle nuances of Ulanova's facial expressions, which I doubt if one can see from the back stalls, the balcony or dress circle. Ulanova's mime and gestures are so natural, so sincere, that they conceal her acting. This cannot be said of any of the other ballerinas of our time. Her dramatic art, like an indescribably magic effect of *chiaroscuro*, defies analysis. It is not important whether she does or does not act according to Stanislavsky's method. All great actors probably used it intuitively before he had formulated it, just as the planets moved according to Copernicus's system before he had discovered it. In art, the creative process is a mystery, and is only partly under conscious control. Ulanova's dancing also defies description. To say, for example, that it

Ulanova's dancing also defies description. To say, for example, that it is visualised music would merely be an attempt to give a name to one of its many qualities. An analysis would only detract from its poetry. Even a poet could only sing but not describe it, for his verse would be another art

form.

Paul Czinner's film has brought Ulanova's art closer to the people, enabling more of them to see it and doing so more often than is possible in a theatre.

The more we see this film, the more we want to see it again and the more we learn about Ulanova's art. The image of her incomparable *Giselle* is stamped for ever in our memory.

This film puts a spell on the audience. It will be a perennial monument to Ulanova's immortal genius. V.K.

### New Trends in Soviet Ballet Ralph Parker

N March 1957, some fifty of the Soviet Union's choreographers and ballet-masters, coming from most of the country's thirty-two ballet companies, met in Moscow to discuss a number of questions affecting their work. Travelling from points as far apart as Novosibirsk and Riga, Alma Ata and Lvov, they conferred for several days and drew up a number of suggestions for the improvement of Soviet choreography, which were laid before the Ministry of Culture. At the beginning of 1958 the Ministry issued instructions which embody most of the measures suggested by the choreographers. It instructs its local representatives to provide funds for the commissioning of new ballets on contemporary subjects; it calls for the organisation of ballet competitions and for the encouragement of experimental ballet; there are to be regular ballet festivals and a far greater exchange of dancers, companies and guest-choreographers; ballet films are to be made, teaching methods reviewed, new ballet publications launched.

One of the initiators of the 1957 conference was Alexander Tomsky, who had then just been appointed chief choreographer at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. In his early fifties, Tomsky has spent thirty-five years of his life in ballet, first as a dancer and later as producer and choreographer. At his post in the leading ballet company of the Soviet Union, Alexander Tomsky will play a key part in bringing about the changes in Soviet ballet envisaged in the latest measures.

At three o'clock on a February afternoon the foyers of the Bolshoi Theatre were deserted, but back-stage a rehearsal of *Spartacus* had just finished, and the passages leading from the dressing-rooms were crowded with members of the *corps de ballet* on their way home to rest before that evening's performance of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. One of them showed me the way to Alexander Tomsky's office.

"The main thing about the Ministry's new measures", said Tomsky, a burly, genial man of disarmingly unintellectual appearance, "is that they originate from us choreographers, from our experience of ballet throughout the country. One feature which promises to be of particular importance is that from now on we shall be in much closer contact, formally and informally, with writers, artists and musicians. Ballet is a fusion of many genres of art, and we choreographers have suffered from working in a certain isolation.

"We are taking organisational steps to promote a freer exchange of experience and ideas. We at the Bolshoi have invited Igor Moiseyev, director of the State Folk-Dance Ensemble, to produce our next major ballet, Aram Khachaturyan's *Spartacus*. Next month Vakhtang Chabukiani will show us his ballet *Othello*, during the Georgian Festival in Moscow. But apart from these and other measures, we are establishing informal contacts with members of the Soviet Writers' Union and the Union of Composers in our search for new ballets on modern themes.

"Modern themes, yes. That is a very difficult question. It cannot be settled in a mechanical manner. After all, our main purpose is to convey emotion. Our Soviet ballet is a ballet of feeling. We are for a ballet of deep feeling. We must stir up the emotions of the public [he used the Russian word volnovat, which means to trouble, agitate, excite, worry, disturb, make uneasy]. The modern public is less interested than were its forefathers in ballet which merely entertains, delights the eye, tickles the senses. People come to the ballet to be profoundly stirred by the tragedy of youth stricken down, by the bitterness of love betrayed, by the pangs of jealousy, the struggle of slaves for freedom.

"This does not necessarily require modern subject-matter. Our most realistic and most highly dramatic ballets are often based on legends or historical subjects. What is more human than Plisetskaya's Swan, telling a tale of fear, sorrow, love and hope of happiness with the gestures of her arms? Or than Struchkova's modest, hard-working little Cinderella? In Pushkin's tale of the abducted Maria of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* we see how a barbaric despotic force can be transformed by love for a pure and upright soul. And in our new production *Spartacus*, the story of the slaves' revolt in ancient Rome, you will find embodied the aspiration of the oppressed for freedom.

"Of course, the feelings we seek to express in our Soviet ballet are coloured by our attitude to life. Take, for example, two interpretations of Saint-Saëns's The Dying Swan — Pavlova's and Ulanova's. Anna Pavlova's superb performance was of a swan resigned to death, Ulanova's of a swan which fights for life against death till the very end. Or our Romeo and Juliet: despite the tragic nature of the immortal story it is on a hopeful note, that of peace between Montague and Capulet, that the ballet ends. Shakespeare's own ending is maintained."

As Tomsky spoke I recalled one of the most remarkable and moving scenes I have ever witnessed at the Bolshoi. It was during the visit of Konrad Adenauer two years ago. There was a gala performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, with Ulanova dancing. Adenauer was sitting in the state box beside Nikolai Bulganin. As Prokofiev's great ballet closed, the heads of the warring houses of Renaissance Venice clasped hands over the open tomb where their dead children lay. The last chord was struck, and then inevitably all heads turned to the state box where the German and the Russian leader stood, and they, too, clasped hands in a solemn gesture of reconciliation. Never have I felt so strongly the Soviet ballet's power of evoking deep emotion.

It seems to me that critics of Soviet choreography — perhaps because they do not share the Moscow view that ballet is essentially the art of emotion —

tend to underestimate the work so far done by Soviet choreographers in fusing dancing and acting into an integral whole, and in creating ballets which, while remaining true to the classical tradition in essential respects, have removed from it those elements of pantomime and divertissement which are alien to realism. This is no mean achievement, particularly if it is borne in mind that Soviet choreographers and dancers have done it without resorting to the short ballet form which by nature requires less of the aid which mime contributed to the unfolding of narrative. Dancers like Maya Plisetskaya and Raissa Struchkova, representatives of the third generation of Soviet dancers, now in their prime, convey emotion virtually without the aid of mime.

I asked Alexander Tomsky whether in the search for new choreographic invention he intended to encourage the performance of the short one-act ballets which had proved so fruitful—limited though their form is—in the hands of western European and American experimenters from the days of

Diaghilev onwards.

"Yes", he said, reflectively, "we are encouraging the short ballet form. The choreographer Varlamov has been commissioned to produce three short ballets: one to Glazounov's music *The Seasons*, one to Prokoviev's *Peter and the Wolf* music, the third a Shostakovich ballet. Alexander Lapauri has been working for some time on a new short ballet to Medtner's music, based on Maxim Gorky's short story *Danko*, and Kasyan Goleisovsky has been commissioned to prepare a ballet for concert performance on Skriabin's music *Skriabiniana*. We are taking eight short ballets to Paris next May, in addition to the four full-length ballets. In 'potted' form the public will see Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, the feast of Crassus' palace from *Spartacus*, the new Khachaturian ballet, the same composer's *Gayaneh* and the Tatar ballet *Shuraleh*."

One of the measures to be taken in accordance with the Ministry of Culture's circular is intended to bring Soviet ballet out of the theatre into stadiums, open-air sites and other places where it can appeal to larger audiences. În this move an important rôle is likely to be played by Igor Moiseyev, whose return to the Bolshoi may well mark a turning-point in the company's history. Moiseyev spent fifteen years of his life as a dancer and ballet-master as a member of the Bolshoi company. In 1939 he left it to organise a festival of folk dancing, and though there was frequent talk of his return certain conservative elements in the choreographic direction of the theatre prevented it. Alexander Tomsky, however, has welcomed him back as producer of Spartacus. This ballet is likely to be a severe test of Moiseyev's art as choreographer. It offers great opportunities for spectacular effects (it requires no less than 500 performers, including the full complement of 250 dancers in the company). Will the solo parts, particularly that of Aegina, the mistress of Crassus, who is instrumental in sowing discord among Spartacus's lieutenants, emerge through the spectacle? Both Plisetskaya and Struchkova. who are rehearsing the rôle, are determined that it shall. Tomsky indeed believes that Spartacus will prove to be as popular with Soviet audiences as Romeo and Juliet and Swan Lake.

### British Ballerina in Moscow

ISS BERYL GREY'S visit to the USSR and appearance with the Bolshoi Theatre ballet in December of last year was a great event in Anglo-Soviet relations. The warm reception given to her by audiences in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Tbilisi and her success dancing the leading rôles in Swan Lake and Giselle with four of the leading ballet companies of the Soviet Union were welcomed, we are sure, by all readers of the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL.

Miss Grey has written about her tour in the Sunday Times and other newspapers, and has talked about her visit on the BBC; a wide audience knows the story of the misfortunes which unfortunately dogged her first days—illness and change of partners—and knows, too, her general impressions. To chat with her about her visit, as we have, however, is almost to re-live the experience with her. The tour brimmed with surprises and new angles on things: to find that the conductor of the orchestra in Kiev was himself a former dancer; to have Yuri Faier, the Bolshoi ballet conductor, work with her for hours at rehearsals; fleeting memories of the new Ukrainian ballet Milana; deeper impressions of Chabukiani's new ballet Othello, produced in Tbilisi; the friendly, intimate relation she established with Maya Plisetskaya and the help the latter gave her; the way her partner Yuri Kondratov responded and adapted himself to her style—she has so many comments on so many facets of Soviet ballet that it is impossible to deal with any of them adequately in an article of this length; luckily she is preparing a book about it.

In this article we confine ourselves to reproducing the notes on Miss Grey's Bolshoi appearance written for *Ogonyok* by Maria Semyonova, who helped her to master the Bolshoi version of *Swan Lake*, and extracts from Miss Grey's BBC broadcast of February 4 (with the permission of the author and of the

BBC).

"Beryl Grey", wrote Maria Semyonova, "is the first British ballerina to have appeared on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre during the forty years of Soviet power. Audiences and artists awaited the performance in which she was to take part with great interest.

"As everyone knows, Swan Lake, in which Beryl Gray took the part of Odette-Odile, has many musical and choreographic versions. The Bolshoi production was new to the English dancer, and I was commissioned to introduce her to it.

"From the very first rehearsal I felt that Beryl Grey would overcome all the difficulties. The guarantee lay in her great talent, and in her school, which is, it is true, slightly different from the present Soviet school of classical dance.

"Beryl Grey has a fine technique of classical dance at her disposal. All of us at the Bolshoi realised that when we saw how lightly and brilliantly she repeated the thirty-two fouettés in act three.

"And then the day for the performance of Swan Lake arrived. The whole of

ballet-loving Moscow was in the theatre.

"The Moscow audience greeted the British ballerina very warmly, with its typical friendliness and hospitality. The third act went off especially well, when Beryl Grey performed her variation in the famous pas-de-deux, and the traditional fouettés, as brilliantly as I had seen her do at rehearsal.

"This dancer's great achievement in the rôle of Odette-Odile is that she

never for a single moment steps outside the figure she creates.

"Moscow audiences and the artists at the Bolshoi Theatre welcomed their British guest with sincere pleasure. Beryl Grey told us that she considered it a high honour to appear on the stage of this famous theatre. For many years she has danced on that of the Royal Covent Garden Opera House in London, in the Sadler's Wells company. Seven months ago she left the company and has been touring with great success in Central and Latin America and in the Union of South Africa.

"The British ballerina hopes, if time permits, to gain a deeper knowledge of the work of the Bolshoi Ballet, through daily rehearsals, working in the 'future training' classes for ballerinas, and through its performances."

"I'd love to go back there and study for a period", Miss Grey said when she read Semyonova's article, and went on to tell of her reception by the Bolshoi artists and audience — one of the vivid impressions of her tour. She described



Y. Kondratov and Beryl Grey in Swan Lake

it on the BBC this way: "I remember well the first time I walked on to the Bolshoi stage. It was after watching an exciting performance of Swan Lake in which Maya Plisetskaya had danced the leading rôle. She is generally accepted as their finest Odette-Odile today. She and the rest of the company greeted me with loud applause. This also happened next morning when the director of the ballet took me to the company classes. Then again, on the stage before my 'dress rehearsal', Yuri Faier, the most sympathetic conductor one could wish for, gave a warm speech of welcome and introduced me to all the orchestra, and they all stood up and clapped. It was really very, very touching.

"The same sort of welcome was also given to me by the audience, over 2,000 strong. The very moment I made my entrance that opening night in Swan Lake there was a big burst of applause which continued for quite a little time. I knew then the audience were with me and eager to welcome a foreign artist. Maya Plisetskaya had written in a Moscow paper that my appearance was awaited with great interest, particularly as the British dancer was to dance Swan Lake, a ballet which makes so many and such varied demands on a performer, and is considered the zenith of Russian classical choreography . . . So I knew the British dancer was being watched critically as well.

"The initial applause heartened me. It was, nevertheless, a great relief to hear the applause at the end of act two and at the final curtain, with all the ceremony of acknowledgements at different stations on that huge stage."

The versions of Swan Lake and Giselle differed not only from the productions to which Miss Grey was used in London, but also from theatre to theatre in the Soviet Union. This entailed much extra rehearsal and hard work; but it brought new experience. "For instance", Miss Grey said on the BBC, "the fourth act of Swan Lake as given by the Bolshoi is completely different from the Covent Garden version, both musically and choreographically. Most of the music in this act I had not heard before —I even inquired if it was Chaikovsky! This fourth act is about ten minutes or more longer, and has a tremendous amount of pas-de-deux and solo dancing in it. There are many big lifts with both the prince and the evil magician — lifts such as those at arm's-length, which I had never done before and which, to my great delight, I learned to do quite quickly."

The friendly, dedicated atmosphere backstage made a deep impact. It was on this note of friendship that she closed her BBC broadcast. "January 1 happened to be the day I gave my last performance of Swan Lake at the Bolshoi Theatre. That evening, before the curtains opened, the director of the ballet spoke to the whole company, wishing them every success in the new year. I was told this would be the 800th performance of Swan Lake in this theatre. Now, whenever I hear the music of this ballet it will take me back to all these friends, and it will always remind me of the great inspiration that

dancing at the Bolshoi gave me."

## Travel to the Soviet Union Sofka Skipwith

"How can I go to the Soviet Union really cheaply?" That is a question one is constantly being asked when working for an agency like Progressive Tours Ltd., specialising in travel to the USSR. Unfortunately there is no cheap way of going there. One vital factor is against it: the distance.

In order to cover the 1,800 miles between London and Moscow the traveller has to pay from £45 to £140 return, according to the means of transport.

The least expensive is by Soviet steamer, the *Baltika*, which sails once a month between London and Leningrad. The fare is £45 return, but it only allows four or five days within the Soviet Union, and takes six days each way. By Swedish Lloyd boat from Tilbury, across Sweden to Helsinki, is about £55 return, depending on the class of travel and berths available. This entails stopping a night at Helsinki and travelling to Leningrad or Moscow on the Soviet train. By this route you arrive in Leningrad at half-past midnight on the fifth day. The overland routes via Warsaw or Prague also take five days and are more expensive still, unless the traveller is prepared for a number of changes and a couple of nights each way sitting up in a second-class compartment. The air fare between London and Moscow is £142 return.

Therefore anyone intending to visit Leningrad or Moscow must be prepared to spend something like £100 on the holiday. Once this has been understood, the would-be traveller can examine the various possibilities offered.

First, those who can afford it have a choice of a number of Intourist itineraries on which they can journey as independent travellers once they have reached the Soviet Union. These itineraries cover the main cities, the Crimea and the Caucasus, and go as far even as Tashkent. The drawback is that individual travel is available only in the *de luxe* category at £10/15/- a day, which, however, entitles you to a lovely room with private bathroom, four meals a day à *la carte*, an interpreter and a private car for sightseeing.

For those who cannot pay so much there are also six itineraries over which the individual can travel at the lower rates (generally reserved for groups of fifteen and over), from £3/12/- a day. For this the traveller must join the Intourist tour on a given date. For instance, four days in Leningrad and four in Moscow cost £28 at the Tourist B rate, with trips starting in Leningrad on May 6 and 23, June 4 and 22, July 3 and 12, and so on. Naturally the tourist must pay his own fare to Leningrad and back from Moscow, where the tour ends.

Individuals can also go by car along certain routes — via Warsaw and Brest to Moscow, a ten-day trip costing £40 from the Soviet frontier, or on to Yalta on a sixteen-day tour costing £54. These are second-class prices, which means sharing a room with your companion, because one of the conditions is that there must be two to a car with a place for the interpreter who meets the car at the frontier. Some new routes are being made available to tourists, but the details of these have not yet been announced.

Besides these tours organised by Intourist, there are a number of inclusive conducted tours being arranged from this country: tours by the Soviet boat, giving five days spent between Leningrad and Moscow for £86; three weeks by coach through Brest, Minsk and Smolensk to Moscow for four days, at prices ranging from 105 to 169 guineas, according to the type of tour arranged; fifteen-day trips by night flight to Helsinki with ten days in Leningrad and Moscow for 112 guineas; a special tour for May Day with a place on the Red

Square to watch the parade, and fourteen days in Leningrad and Moscow for £128; three-week tours going as far south as Stalingrad, and including a cruise on the Volga-Don Canal and a visit to Kiev, for £155.

"What are the hotels like?" "Are the trains comfortable?" "What sort of food does one get?" "Can one go about freely in the towns if one is on a conducted tour?"

Modern hotels are being built, but most of them as yet are of the old-fashioned kind with huge rooms and crystal chandeliers, beautifully warm, with hot and cold water in each room and baths (free of charge) on the same landing for those who have no bathroom to the room. Intourist hotels also usually have facilities for money-changing, an office where theatre tickets or taxis can be ordered, a post-office, a bookstall where postcards are obtainable, and a souvenir stall. Food is rather richer than it is in this country, but the tourists very soon acquire a taste for borsch or boeuf stroganov or the glass of yoghurt for breakfast, as well as omelette or cheese-cake or sweet buns. There is not much fresh fruit, but compôtes are a frequent end to a meal, and most popular of all are the different varieties of ice-cream. Both winter and summer ice-cream is in great demand, sold on street corners and in the galleries of G.U.M., the great State universal store in Moscow. An unusual variety is blackcurrant ice-cream.

When the group of tourists arrives in a town, the Intourist interpreter generally announces the programme, which includes sightseeing tours or visits both morning and afternoon. Although most travellers join these trips as the best way to see the most in a limited time, there is certainly no obligation to do so, and frequently some members of the group decide to wander off alone or to meet Russian friends they have newly made in a café or at the theatre. Evenings are usually left free, and the tourists can go to opera, ballet, puppets or circus, with ticket—prices ranging from fifteen shillings to twenty-seven and sixpence.

Train travel is also quite different from that in western Europe. Because of the far greater distances between towns, the journeys are generally overnight. Every passenger has a sleeper; these are in two categories, "soft" and "hard". The soft, whether two or four bunks to a compartment, is supremely comfortable, with the bedding laid on a sprung base. The "hard" merely indicates that the foundation is not sprung. Both categories have mattress, sheets, blankets, pillows, pillow-cases and towel provided. The actual trains are a good deal broader than ours, so both in the compartments and in the corridor there is more room to move about. Each compartment has a table with a table lamp as well as overhead lighting: at intervals the white-coated attendant comes round offering glasses of tea which he makes from a samovar fixed in a wall cupboard at one end of the carriage. A glass of tea with sugar, served in a typical Russian glass-holder, costs thirty kopecks (about threepence at the tourist exchange of twenty-seven roubles to the pound). Each compartment also has a wireless which can be switched on for music and announcements of approaching stations.

All these superficial facts, however, can give no idea of the impact made on the tourist by a visit to the Soviet Union. The extraordinary juxtaposition of the new and the old; modern architecture jostling the "barbaric"; the impression of unchanging slumbering spaces and the sense of a whole nation hastening forward with giant steps; Moscow thronged with people of all countries and in all costumes — and the plains of central Russia, where there seems no living soul as far as the eye can see to the horizon; the towering University; the bookshops with queues forming outside waiting for opening-time; the supreme pride of every citizen of the Soviet Union, wherever you meet him, in "our" achievements, whether those of his own collective farm,

the sputniks or the new electro-station in far-distant Sibera. All come back from the Soviet Union with a new understanding, whatever their political ideas, whether they approve of the régime or not; all come back convinced that the people of that vast land are warm, friendly, gay and hospitable, eager to talk and ask questions, with one urgent, heartfelt message: "Tell everyone when you go back that all we want is peace."

The author of the above article, as Director of Progressive Tours Ltd., 100A Rochester Row, London, SW1, has been conducting tourist groups to the USSR for the last three years, and was the first person in Britain to sign a tourist agreement with *Intourist*.

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## SOR Notes

THE period since the beginning of December has been one more of preparation of future events than of current public activity. The latter consisted of three interesting occasions and a very well attended Annual General Meeting.

At the beginning of December, Professor J. D. Bernal, FRS, spoke to an attentive and enthralled audience on last summer's international symposium in Moscow on the origins of life. Professor Bernal's lucid description was fascinating to the lay public and (to judge by the note-taking one saw) at the same time full of interest to the scientists present. The symposium or conference, the speaker explained, was nearly unique in the annals of science, since seldom if ever have so many international specialists of the top rank in so many different disciplines been brought together to discuss a single scientific problem from their various points of view. Among those who had taken part were Professors Linus Pauling and H. D. Muller of the USA, Mr N. W. Pirie, FRS, and Mr R. L. M. Synge, FRS, and the speaker from Great Britain. The discussion was based on Academician A. I. Oparin's book The Origin of Life Upon the Earth (published in Britain by Oliver & Boyd at 35/-).\* Academician Oparin himself had taken an active part in the discussions. I cannot attempt to summarise Professor Bernal's talk; the proceedings of the conference, however, are being published, and we hope that they will be available in the not distant future.

Tape Recital. In January, Dr Alan Bush presented a recital of recent Soviet tape recordings at SCR House. I fear that our preparations for the evening were inadequate, and as a result it was rather a small audience that heard Dr Bush discuss (and himself illustrate on the piano) a number of Shostakovich's preludes and fugues from the collection Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues. We had, of course, played ten of them in the winter of 1954-55 at one of our tape recitals, but again unfortunately to a small audience. Now they have just been performed on the Third Programme of the BBC by Mr James Gibb, Mr Leonard Cassini and Miss Kyla Greenbaum, and are becoming known to music lovers here. Dr Bush's recital also included settings of Marshak translations of Burns, by Sviridov, a Soviet composer of growing stature, whose work is comparatively unknown outside the USSR. The settings were delightful, and concluded with Honest Poverty as Marshak has entitled the well-known favourite A Man's a Man for A' That. I thought this one particularly effective. The final item was Prokofiev's Seventh Piano Sonata, played by Svyatislav Richter, a pianist whose home reputation rivals that of Gilels. A visit from Richter is becoming a musical must.

Soviet Education. Again in January we had a successful meeting at the University of London Institute of Education, where Professor Spink presided at a stimulating talk on the Soviet educational system by Professor J. Lauwerys, Professor of Comparative Education at the Institute, who visited and lectured in the USSR last year under our auspices. Those who have expressed surprise at the progress of Soviet education would have found some answers and much to think about in Professor Lauwerys' approach to the subject, which gave me for one a new slant on a subject with which I have become fairly familiar.

Back-Room Work. The SCR has much to do which does not attract notice, unless we talk about it, but which is part and parcel of the work of fostering cultural relations, and to support which we appeal to the generosity

<sup>\*</sup> A copy is in the SCR Library and available on loan.

of members and friends. The usual steady stream of schools and teachers have solicited our help in teaching the geography of the USSR, and we have been able to supply them with visual material which they have found useful. Readers who can do so might inform teacher friends of this aspect of our work.

The forthcoming visit of the Moscow Art Theatre has brought us many requests from publishers and journalists for historical material, photographs and information.

Requests from Soviet libraries for help in obtaining micro-films of historical records and articles in English magazines have absorbed some of our time and attention. An interesting request we are working on came from the Leningrad Conservatoire for material published many years ago on the life of Anton Rubinstein. The Conservatoire has published the first volume of a life of Rubinstein (available in the SCR Library) and work is proceeding on the second. Another request comes from a professor at the Moscow Conservatoire for a book on his speciality, 'cello playing. We have also been able to help a lecturer in English in the Ukraine with a thesis she is preparing for a higher degree, for which she needed information on the pronunciation of Greek words in English.

Another request came from a theatre in an old Central Russian town wanting copies of John Osborne's plays Look Back in Anger and The Entertainer, in which they were interested. We have been able to supply them, and await further news.

Chaikovsky Competition. The Chaikovsky International Competition for Pianists and Violinists is being held in Moscow in the latter half of March and the beginning of April. The violin section begins on March 18, and we have been able to help three young violinists to make their applications, to correspond with the Organising Committee for the Competition and to get the Russian and Soviet music needed. There are not the piano entries that one could have wished. One young pianist studying in London has, however, been accepted, and we have been able to help her too. We wish them all success.

Competition for the Soviet entries has been fierce. About a hundred pianists are competing for the right to take part, in a two-round preliminary elimination contest. Similar elimination rounds are being held for violinists. Together they form one of the first Union-wide competitions for young musicians to be held in the USSR for some time.

Anniversaries. Two anniversaries of English writers have been marked recently in the Soviet Union, and readers may be interested in some brief details.

Our friends in the Uzbek Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries observed the 170th anniversary of the birth of Byron on January 22 with a joint meeting with the Union of Uzbek Writers and the State Institute of Foreign Languages. Students of the English faculty read Byron in the original, while several Uzbek poets read translations they had made. Dr Izaat Sultan opened the meeting, and A. Ibrahimova read a paper on Byron's life and work. In addition Tashkent Radio broadcast a special Byron programme.

On January 31 a meeting was held in Moscow to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of John Galsworthy. This occasion, arranged by the Library of Foreign Literature and the Foreign Commission of the Union of Soviet Writers in the Library's lecture hall, included a paper in English by A. Anikst and extracts from Galsworthy's plays performed in English by actors from Moscow theatres. The evening ended with a concert of Galsworthy's favourite music.

It is interesting to note, too, that our old friend Samuel Marshak published translations of a number of Blake's lyrics in connection with the recent bicentenary of his birth.

H.C.C.

## Book Reviews

### MASSIVE **STATISTICAL** SURVEY

Dostizhenia Sovetskoi Vlasti za 40 Let v Tsifrakh. [Achievements of Soviet Power over Forty Years in Figures.] (Central Statistical Department of the USSR Council of Ministers, Moscow, 1957. Pp. 370, 32 plates [diagrams]. 12 roubles 70 kopeks. Print 150,000.)

THIS volume, the latest of the new series of comprehensive statistical reports published in the USSR, makes a welcome contribution to knowledge. Issued in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution, it gives a massive survey of the main fields of Soviet economic and social life, its socialist character, industrial and agricul-tural development, building and transport, the cultural revolution,

material prosperity.

Popular and even simple in form, and accompanied by numerous supplementary notes which are by no means the least important of its contents-for example, a handy summary of the war damage suffered in 1941-4, now no longer easily available elsewhere (pp. 20, 21); many lists of new industrial plants in various parts of the country; a three-page survey of the natural wealth of the USSR (pp. 115-117)—the handbook is none the less a highly scholarly piece of work, of importance for all kinds of people concerned with Soviet affairs.

Different interests will find different matter to attract them in its numerous and varied data. This reviewer particuarly noted the tables which showed the growth and classification of towns (pp. 9, 10); the wealth of new information about the position of women (pp. 13, 265-8, 345, 349-51, 358); the wide range of information about industrial and agricultural outlook in absolute figures; the tables showing main industrial, agricultural and cultural changes for each of the fifteen Union Republics (pp. 118-42, 194-6, 294-324 and elsewhere); marriage and divorce statistics; passenger transport developments; length of the working day; data of the Academies of Sciences; and much else.

Those who can read the handbook in

the original will unquestionably agree with the reviewer that it would be well worth

translating into English.

If that were done, however, it could be made more useful to the foreign reader by a few additions. Thus he will be sur-prised not to find, among the vital statis-tics, any precise figures of the decline of infantile mortality since 1913—although it is well known that the USSR has nothing to be ashamed of in this respect, even if its general average is still a little higher than that of some countries. Some data the Autonomous Republics Regions, and of the National Areas-the smaller national units of the USSR-comparable with those supplied for the fifteen Union Republics, would be of great interest to those studying the question of nationality, colonial status, and so on. For the same reason, and also because of the wide concern in many countries about the role of provincial and rural newspapers, the press data very curtly summarised (p. 293) could be substantially enlarged with advantage—the more because much fuller figures were published some years ago, in volumes almost inaccessible abroad. And would it not be possible for comparable figures of the "barn harvest" of grain (i.e. net figures of what has actually reached the granaries) for the main years surveyed in the handbook (1913, 1928, 1932, 1940, 1950, 1956 or 1957) to be made available, as they are for other important produce, and for grain marketed and delivered to the State?

The absence of such obvious desiderata does not, of course, alter the fact that the new publication of the Central Statistical Department is an invaluable aid to the better understanding of the Soviet Union and of the decisive changes for the better which 1917 brought to its peoples.

### **CATHERINE** THE LITTLE

The Memoirs of Princess Dashkov. Trans. and Ed. by Kyril Fitzlyon. (John Calder, 30/-.)

THIS rococo but absorbing work (of which, Mr. Fitzlyon says, the present publication is the first complete version ever to appear anywhere) includes one of the three statements on Catherine the Great's coup d'état in 1762 which are the

only eyewitness accounts extant.

Catherine Vorontsov, who became Princess Dashkov, called herself Catherine the Little; her sister was Paul III's mistress, her brother the Russian ambassador to the Court of St. James, and she was herself a friend of Diderot, Voltaire and Horace Walpole. In the conspiracy to Horace Walpole. In the conspiracy to dethrone Paul III and make his wife sole Empress (as against Paul's scheme to divorce his wife and marry the Princess's sister), the Princess believed herself to

have been the prime factor, and she certainly played a considerable part.

She hotly repudiates, however, both on her own part and the Empress's, any suggestion of complicity in Paul's murder. This may or may not be justified. The exuberant and vehement Princess is at her least convincing when she offers as "complete proof" Alexis Orlov's show mercy on me letter to the Empress after the murder. This document, whose discovery half a lifetime later she hails as the final rebuttal of the "slanders" against Catherine, was not in Orlov's own hand, as she states; moreover, she herself admits that he was intoxicated when he vowed himself worthy of death. On the face of it, the "confession" in fact merely shows that Orlov was not so befuddled as to forget to assure the Empress obliquely that they would not implicate her in the crime. And how did the Princess know that the Count was "dead drunk at the time" of writing a letter which, prudently enough, she does not claim to have seen?

As is usual with spirited contemporary recollections, this is a book with quite as much between the lines as in them. The Princess—who incidentally was the Director of the Academy of Sciences and the founder and first President of the literary and philological Russian Academy—has a dashingly self-assured style, with much unintended self-criticism. and abounds in rapid picturesque sidelights on manners, costume and official ceremonial. Well may we feel grateful to her young Anglo-Irish friend Martha Wilmot, who persuaded her to commit her memories to paper, and who with her sister made two copies from the Princess's original.

One of these Miss Wilmot burnt when the Russian Government instituted a search for this dangerous work; but her sister already had the other safe in Ireland. It did not, however, appear till 1840, after the death of the Princess's brother, who had not left England and had refused to sanction publication. Not until some forty years later still—more than a century after the events it describes—was the Princess's original MS discovered and published in Russia. The Wilmot MS, however, had contained additions in the Princess's own hand which she had not copied into her own MS: the present admirable translation is made from the amalgamation of the two.

No one who savours the pungency of actual contemporary comment on famous people and events—and who can take the memorialist's ripe self-satisfaction with a corrective grain of salt—can fail to enjoy this galloping excursion into real-life picaresque.

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### SOVIET TECHNICAL **EDUCATION**

Soviet Education for Science and Technology. A. G. Korol. (Technology Press of Massa-chusetts Institute of Technology. New chusetts Institute of Technology. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. London: Chapman & Hall, 68/-.)

THIS is a monumental work which is useful because it gathers together a mass of hitherto scattered material from American, British and Soviet sources, much of which has not been available in English. It gives a comprehensive picture of the whole educational structure, including the general ten-year secondary school, and contains an abundance of statistics, charts, syllabuses, entrance regulations, timetables and bibliographical references.

Although the author does not set out to make a comparative study, he sometimes slips in some striking figures: on page 63, for instance, he writes: "Every boy and girl in the Soviet Union who completes the ten-year school course (1.3 million in 1956) has had, roughly, the equivalent of 4.4 high school years of mathematics and 5.9 high school years of science. In contrast, it has been estimated that in 1954 about 23% of American public high schools offered neither physics nor chemistry (but these schools accounted only for 5.8% of the twelfth grade enrolment); only one out of five American public highschool students takes physics, and only two-thirds take any algebra.

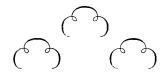
The figures of the total of technologists and technicians being turned out today in the USSR, and the world-shaking results they have achieved, speak for themselves. The author admits that the Soviet Union is making great strides in the provision of a generous ratio of technicians. He goes at length into the question of the quality as well as the quantity of top-grade specialists. He has to recognise that high standards are set and achieved, and that centralised State planning can train and deploy the country's scientific manpower and direct its energies into specified channels, but he is constantly telling the reader that this is done by dictation from above, Party tyranny and general "pushing around", and that initiative and independence of thought have been sapped. His concluding chapter is particularly biased: he claims that "training" and "indoctrination" have replaced education. Is it not somewhat presumptuous of an American

to insinuate that the political climate of the Soviet Union drives students to opt for "safe" specialities such as science and maths? Is escapism really the key to their achievements?

The section on the Labour Reserve scheme has some weaknesses. While it is true that the vocational courses of six months to two years and more at the FZO and Labour Reserve schools do not give qualifications equal to the tenth-year school-leaving certificate (Attestat zrelosti) or the Tekhnikum diploma, and while it is probably true that these schools attract in the main youngsters from lower-income families because they get full maintenance, grants and payment for practical productive work done, it seems hardly fair to describe them as an educational "dead end" or a fraudulent method of using child labour. There is no dead end for even semi-skilled workers in the Soviet Union if they are prepared to study as well as work. These schools reached their peak in the post-war years, when many young people had to start work with little schooling behind them. With the extension of the ten-year school, these trade schools are changing and now include twoyear technical colleges for secondary-school leavers. The interesting vocational, educational and cultural work going on in these schools (and also their problems and difficulties) are described in the monthly journal *Professionalno-tekhni* cheskoye obrazovaniye (Trade and technical education), which Mr. Korol incorrectly quotes in his bibliography as a journal devoted to the Tekhnikums. The Tekhnikums have their own journal, spetsial'noye Sredneye obrazovaniye (Secondary specialised education), which he does not mention. It is a pity too that Mr. Korol does not seem to know the useful book by A. N. Veselov on the history of the training of skilled workers and the Labour Reserve scheme (Nizhneye professionalno-tekhnicheskoye obrazovaniye v RSFSR, Moscow 1955).

Although the author disapproves of Soviet methods, plays down the importance of the large number of external (correspondence) students and casts doubts on the probability of universal ten-year education being achieved by 1960, it is quite clear that he, like many of his counterparts in Britain, is well aware of the challenge walls its successes represent.

C. E. SIMMONDS. the challenge which the Soviet system and



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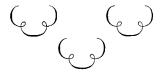
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